

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Previously Presented) A front-end loader for a percutaneous transluminal system for an intracardiac device, said front-end loader comprising:

a proximal portion comprising a proximal end, a distal end, and an expanded lumen positioned therebetween, said expanded lumen tapering towards said distal end of said proximal portion; and

a distal portion, comprising a tube comprising a proximal end, a distal end, a lumen extending therethrough, said lumen of said distal portion being co-extensive with said expanded lumen of said proximal portion;

wherein said distal end of said distal portion comprises means for reducing air introduction into a patient's cardiovascular system when said percutaneous transluminal system is in use during delivery of said intracardiac device from said lumen of said distal portion.

2. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 1, wherein the means for reducing air introduction comprises a beveled edge at said distal end of said distal portion.

3. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 2, wherein said beveled edge is

chamfered at least partially around its perimeter.

4. (Canceled).

5. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 1, wherein the expanded lumen is conically shaped.

6. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 1, wherein said intracardiac device comprises an intracardiac occluder.

7. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 6, wherein said intracardiac occluder comprises an occluder for treating an atrial septal defect.

8. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 6, wherein said intracardiac occluder comprises an occluder for treating a ventricular septal defect.

9. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 6, wherein said intracardiac occluder comprises an occluder for treating patent ductus arteriosus.

10. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 6, wherein said intracardiac occluder comprises an occluder for treating patent foramen ovale.

11. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 1, wherein said means for

reducing air introduction receives said intracardiac device to withdraw said intracardiac device from the patient's body.

12. (Canceled).

13. (Canceled).

14. (Withdrawn) A front-end loader for a percutaneous transluminal system for an intracardiac device, said front-end loader comprising:

a proximal portion comprising a proximal end, a distal end, and an expanded lumen positioned therebetween, said expanded lumen tapering towards said distal end of said proximal portion; and

a distal portion comprising a tube comprising a proximal end, a distal end, a lumen extending therethrough, said lumen of said distal portion being co-extensive with said expanded lumen of said proximal portion;

wherein said distal end of said distal portion comprises means for facilitating retrieval of said intracardiac device from a patient's cardiovascular system into said lumen of said distal portion when said percutaneous transluminal system is in use.

15. (Withdrawn) The front-end loader of claim 14, wherein the distal end of said tube is beveled.

16. (Withdrawn) The front-end loader of claim 14, wherein the means for facilitating retrieval of said intracardiac device comprises a chamfered rim around the perimeter of the distal end of the tube.

17. (Canceled).

18. (Withdrawn) The front-end loader of claim 14, wherein the expanded lumen is conically shaped.

19. (Withdrawn) The front-end loader of claim 14, wherein said intracardiac device comprises an intracardiac occluder.

20. (Withdrawn) The front-end loader of claim 19, wherein said intracardiac occluder comprises an occluder for treating an atrial septal defect.

21. (Withdrawn) The front-end loader of claim 19, wherein said intracardiac occluder comprises an occluder for treating a ventricular septal defect.

22. (Withdrawn) The front-end loader of claim 19, wherein said intracardiac occluder comprises an occluder for treating patent ductus arteriosus.

23. (Withdrawn) The front-end loader of claim 19, wherein said intracardiac occluder

comprises an occluder for treating patent foramen ovale.

24. (Withdrawn) The front-end loader of claim 14, wherein said distal end of said tube receives said intracardiac device to withdraw said intracardiac device from the patient's body.

25. (Withdrawn) The front-end loader of claim 14, wherein said distal end of said tube receives said intracardiac device to deliver said intracardiac device into the patient's body.

26. (Canceled).

27. (Withdrawn) A method for delivering a collapsible intracardiac device to a defect at an anatomical site in a patient's cardiovascular system, said method comprising:

providing a front-end loader comprising:

a proximal portion comprising an expanded lumen; and

a distal portion, comprising: a tube comprising a proximal end, a distal end, a lumen extending therethrough, said lumen of said distal portion being co-extensive with said expanded lumen of said proximal portion, and means for reducing air introduction into the patients' cardiovascular system said means positioned at said distal end of said tube;

receiving said intracardiac device in the lumen of said tube;

delivering said intracardiac device to the patient; and

implanting the intracardiac device at the anatomical site in the patient.

28. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27, further comprising:

introducing said means for reducing air introduction into a lumen of a portion of an introducer sheath for the intracardiac device and crossing a gland in the lumen of the introducer sheath.

29. (Withdrawn) A method for retrieving a collapsible intracardiac device from a patient, comprising: providing a front-end loader comprising:

providing a front-end loader comprising:

a proximal portion comprising an expanded lumen; and

a distal portion, comprising a tube comprising a proximal end, a distal end, a lumen extending therethrough, said lumen of said distal portion being co-extensive with said expanded lumen of said proximal portion, and means for facilitating retrieval of said intracardiac device, said means positioned at said distal end of said tube;

receiving said intracardiac device in the lumen of said tube; and

retrieving said intracardiac device from the patient.

30. (Canceled).

31. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 27, wherein said means for reducing air introduction comprises a beveled edge at said distal end of said distal portion.

32. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 28, further comprising the step of allowing blood from the patient's cardiovascular system to exit through a proximal end of said introducer sheath.

33. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 29, wherein said means for facilitating retrieval of said intracardiac device comprises a chamfered rim around the perimeter of the distal end of said distal portion.

34. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 29, wherein the distal end of said distal portion is beveled.

35. (Currently Amended) A front-end loader for a percutaneous transluminal system for an intracardiac device, said front-end ~~loaded~~ loader comprising:

a proximal portion comprising a proximal end, a distal end, and an expanded lumen positioned therebetween, said expanded lumen tapering towards said distal end of said proximal portion; and

a distal portion comprising a tube comprising a proximal end, a distal end, a lumen extending therethrough, said lumen of said distal portion being co-extensive with said expanded lumen of said proximal portion;

wherein said tube comprises a beveled edge at said distal end; and

further wherein said tube comprises a chamfered rim around the inner perimeter of said beveled edge.

36. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 35, wherein the said chamfered rim comprising an outer rim and an inner rim, said inner rim positioned proximal to said outer rim.

37. (Previously Presented) The front-end loader of claim 35, wherein the expanded lumen is conically shaped.